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FM AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
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INFO RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0002
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0004
RUEHLE/AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

UNCLAS LUXEMBOURG 000011

SIPDIS
DEPT FOR HAITI EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE
USAID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
DEPT FOR EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [LU](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: TFHA01: LUXEMBOURG RESCUERS IN AND OUT OF HAITI IN 72 HOURS;
GOL PROMISES 700,000 EUROS

REF: LUXEMBOURG 7; STATE 4854

11. (U) SUMMARY. The Grand Duchy's 17-man contingent to Haiti has already returned to Luxembourg following provision of emergency services on the ground in Port-au-Prince. The team returned to Belgium via Belgian military aircraft and were received back in Luxembourg by Defense Minister Halsdorf and Cooperation Minister Jacobs on Sunday (January 17). In the face of some skepticism, the Luxembourg and Belgian teams announced their missions' withdrawal, saying they believed they had done all they could to aid in the effort to locate survivors. Separately, Luxembourg's Council of State announced Friday (January 15) the GoL's intention to dedicate 700,000 euros (approximately US\$1.05 million) to the ongoing efforts in Haiti. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) Pre-empting criticism that the assistance was short-lived, Red Cross representative Michel Feider commented that it makes little sense for a rescue team with rescue dogs to stay on the ground to search for survivors when the chances of finding survivors to rescue is greatly reduced 72-96 hours after an earthquake. By staying on-site, Feider argued, the team runs the risk of getting underfoot of the other teams conducting recovery and humanitarian aid missions. The Luxembourg Red Cross does, however, have a man on the ground as part of the effort to provide emergency medical assistance to survivors. Laurence Klopp, a Luxembourgish member of the Benelux Emergency Response Unit, arrived in Santo Domingo on Saturday (January 16). There is reportedly also a nurse scheduled to travel to Haiti this week, as part of the Luxembourg chapter of Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres).

13. (U) According to Luxembourgish daily Le Quotidien, one source close to the rescuers speaking on condition of anonymity suggested the decision for the rescue mission to come home so soon was influenced by "political" motivations linked to security-related problems on the ground. According to the same story, the UN blue helmets providing protection to the Luxembourgers came under fire - presumably from looters - Saturday evening (January 16). While sources appear to be members of the rescue team itself, the team leader, Yves Marx, told the press that the team's departure was not accelerated due to security threats. "We never had the impression that we were under threat," Marx said. "We simply came home because the duration of our intervention was over." Finally, Marx added that the Belgian Army made the decision to come back.

¶4. (U) The two Luxembourgish families in Haiti pursuing international adoptions (ref a) managed to escape harm in the quake but were forced to return to Luxembourg without having completed the adoption process. Press reports indicate the families returned with the rescue mission over the weekend. One daily reports that currently thirteen Luxembourg families are pursuing adoption of Haitian children.

¶5. (SBU) On January 15, Luxembourg's Council of State announced a 700,000 euro pledge to ongoing efforts in Luxembourg. Of this total, half a million euros is designated for reconstruction efforts, with the remaining 200,000 euros dedicated to food assistance. The GoL also announced its support for an international conference to organize assistance efforts to Haiti, as well as debt forgiveness programs. Pol/Econ Chief spoke with Marc Bichler, Director of Cooperation and Development, on January 19, thanked the GoL for its contributions to date, and delivered ref b demarche points. Bichler attributed Luxembourg's rapid response, in part, to the close working relationship the GoL enjoys with its Belgian counterparts. Bichler added that the GoL has no outstanding assistance offers awaiting a USG response.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Luxembourg's lightning fast mobilization of a 17-member, 7-dog rescue mission to Haiti was impressive. The direct response and immediate offer of assistance,

even before we or the EU asked, symbolizes an interesting streak of independence. Pledging 700,000 euros on the heels of its rescue mission lends credence to its commitment to this humanitarian action. The rescue team's hasty effort should not be seen as disengagement; rather, it is indicative of realistic assessment of the team's capabilities. Luxembourg was one of the first to step to the plate and deserves recognition for doing so.

¶7. Minimize considered.
Stroum